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ABSTRACT

Ways in which the application of positivistic, phenomenological, ethnomethodological, and critical theories affect educational administration theory and practice are explored in this paper. A review of literature concludes that positivism separates practice from abstract theory; phenomenology offers a different view of reality; ethnomethodology is based on the consensus of school community members and recognition of contextual influences on action; and critical theory can generate a dynamic self-reflection process. Positivism views the school administrator as an agent of the social order; phenomenology, as a negotiator; ethnomethodology, as a collaborative leader; and critical theory, as a facilitator for the fulfillment of others' human potential. A conclusion is that there are limitations to each paradigm, yet each offers a new richness of interpretation for educational administration research, theory, and practice. Two tables outline the theoretical premises and implications for practice of each perspective. (53 references) (LMI)

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THE EFFECTS OF APPLYING ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH METHODS TO EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

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THE EFFECTS OF APPLYING ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH METHODS TO EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

While the focus of the post-positivistic debates is primarily on research methodology, the theory and practice derived from such research must also be explored. Therefore, this article seeks to provide the reader with a more comprehensive understanding of the positivistic, phenomenological, ethnomethodological and critical theory paradigms by clarifying how the application of each research method to educational administration would affect theory and practice.

The persistence and growth of the current debates in the educational administration literature regarding the positivistic paradigm and proposed solutions to this conflict are of utmost significance to educational administration theory, research and practice. Currently, educational administration theory is generally derived from the assumptions of positivism. However, the proposals in the literature have raised questions as to whether other paradigms would not be more appropriate. Evans (1984) sees the resolution of these debates as intrinsically linked to educational administration practice as indicated in his following statement:

> How we choose to respond to the question of what counts as science and therefore what we allow as knowledge are of decisive significance not only for educational administration concerned as a field of study but more importantly as an area of professional practice. (p.

2)

The major arguments against positivism are twofold. First, authors such as Abel (1981), Berger and Luckmann (1966), Giddens (1979) and Perrow (1982) have all questioned the positivistic position as appropriate for studying human behavior because of the positivistic assumption that all of reality can be known through the use of objective measures. These authors posit the claim that knowledge of human behavior can be understoood by constructed phenomena and, therefore, assume either the lack of existence of an objective external reality and/or the intrusiveness and creativity of the human mind in knowing reality.

Second, the results of empirical research in educational administration have also produced controversy. Consideration of this topic has been undertaken by Foster (1984), Frank (1984), Lincoln (1984, 1985), and Martin (1984). Discusssion in this area ranges from positivistic methodology having produced little or no results with the end product being no real theory of edcucational administration to positivistic methodology being improperly applied to educational administration behavior and thus producing few significant results.

Glass (1977) exemplifies those researchers who criticize the paucity of results in the application

empirical research to educational administration practice when he states:

> The payoff of quantitative program evaluations to program administrators and bureaucrats has been far less than anticipated. Administrators had expected these types of evaluations to identify "what works," "who gets better," "what areas to change," and so on. These expectations have not been generally met. (p.39)

Therefore, at a time when education is being closely scrutinized as to its methods and outcomes, some educational administration researchers are questioning the results of historically basing their theoretical position under the positivistic perspective. The practical results desired from such theory and research have been found by some to be wanting.

These concerns have caused some researchers to seek solutions by directing their efforts toward other research methodologies. Three alternatives to positivism have been promenintly presented: First, ethonomethodology which is derived from a rich background of anthropological studies; second, phenomenology which presents an atithetical epistemological position to positivism; third, critical theory which encompasses positivisitic, Marxian and Freudian concepts. These three research methodologies are receiving greater attention in related literature most especially in

the countries of Great Britain, Australia and Canada.

Phenomenology, as the antithesis of the positivistic position, has received notoriety in educational administration because of the Greenfield-Griffiths "debates" (Gronn, 1983). The subjectivity of phenomenology leads to a methodology of deduction and unique qualitative understanding as opposed to the quantitative empirical method of positivism.

Ethnomethodology is currently being offered as an alternative paradigm for educational administration as demonstrated at the 1983 U.C.E.A. Conference entitle "Linking New Concepts of Organizftions to New Paradigms of Inquiry" and the papers presented there by Clark and Guba. While the focus in ethnomethodology is often on the research method as exemplified by the case study, it is most concerned with the interaction between the individual and the society which the individual inhabits.

Critical theory, developed by the Frankfurt School of sociologists in the 1920's, is also offered as an alternative to positivism. A renewal of interest in critical theory occurred during the tumultuous 1960's and it continues to be consistently included in the literature of sociology as an alternative paradigm (Giroux, 1983). Bates (1980, 1982, 1983) and Foster (1980, 1982, 1986) are

currently investigating the application of critical theory to educational administration practice.

Another common formulation deriving from the criticism of positivism is the positioning of the positvistic position in opposition to what is termed the "subjectivstic," "qualitative," or "naturalistic" position. Such distinction is often made in the literature because of the acceptance by some researchers that the premises of subjective and objective knowledge are the fundamental differences among the positions. Because of this basic distinction, phenomenology, ethonmethodology and critical theory are often vewed as one subjective position under such geernal headings as hermeneutics (Giddens, 1976), interpretative sociology (Schutz in Giddens, 1976), naturalistic inquiry (Lincolon and Guba, 1985) or constructionism (Magoon, 1977).

In much of the current debate literature, the advocates of positivism, ehtnomethodology , phenomenology and critical theory present their posititions as true alternative paradigms. That will be be the position assumed in this article. While similarities between alternative positions and an emerging call for synthesis exist (Lincoln and Guba, 1984), enough dissimilarities between positions exist to view them as true alternatives. These smilarities and differences will be explained in the following explications

of positivism and the proposed alternatives to positivism.

Positivism

Positivistic Educational Administration Theory

Theory for the positivistic researcher is based upon two general assumptions: first, the inherent order of reality; second, the objective nature of reality. Because of the inherent order of reality, the educational administrator with a positivistic perspective views orderliness not as a goal to be attained but as an existing quality of the world, society, schools and of human behavior. This order is best described in the positivistic search for laws which underlie all of natural and human life. These underlying laws enable generalizations to be discovered and applied to similar phenomena. Schools are viewed as types of organizations and the behavior of people within all types of organizations can be studied and compared. Theories about school administration are seen to be general theories about administration applied to schools.

Hoy and Miskel (1987) describe such generalized application of organizational characteristics as typologies

which are seen as beneficial to the researcher in that they "allow for a comparative study of organizations as diverse as businesses, schools, prisons and churches" (p. 32). Therefore, the application of characteristics of administrative behavior in the business field to the behavior of school administrators (Blake and Mouton, 1981; Katz and Kahn, 1978; Williams, Wall, Martin and Berchin, 1974) is viewed by the positivistic researcher as consistent with the inherent ordering of human behavior and the application of this order across differing manifestations of human behavior.

Schools being viewed as types of organizations is also consistent with the second assumption of positivistic theory definition which assumes that, as a form of social substructure, organizations such as schools have an objective existence and can be studied as entities in themselves. Objectivity can be maintained because the observed phenomena and the observer are both objective entities. Thus, schools can be objectively defined as types of organizations and various models of organizational function and behavior can be applied to them, such as Hoy and Miskel's (1987) application of the contingency model or Katz and Kahn's (1978) application of the social systems model. The classic model of business as applied to schools

is the production model which Greenfield (1975) defines as "a set of roles and resources arranged to yield a product which conforms to predetermined goals" (p. 93)

The positivistic approach to educational administration theory can thus be seen as defining a generalized and abstract view of human behavior. Cross-categorical perspectives are justified due to the assumed regularities of human behavior which are based upon the assumed underlying laws of all phenomena. It is also assumed in the positivistic theoretical position that the generation of consistent theories regarding human behavior will eventually result in the discovery of laws for human behavior which would be similar to laws discovered for natural phenomena.

Positivistic Educational Administration Practice

Because the goal of empirical research is to predict future administrative behavior and, thereby, gain control over such behavior, the positivistic researcher seeks to discover those administrative actions which would be most effective. Also, because administration is generalizable under this perspective, effective administrative action in any field can be applied to the behavior of school administrators. Thus, while positivism's goal is to

discover what is, it also seeks to discover relationships between variables and these relationships point to what is or is not effective. The result of this discovery can be directive in that effective behavior would best be followed.

Under the positivistic perspective, schools have specific goals which are to be achieved. These school goals are viewed by Popkewitz (1984) as "distinct from practice and examined separately" (p. 40). However, self-sustaining goals do define the roles of the personnel within schools in that goals give direction to action. Greenfield (1975) explains this relationship between school goals and administrative behavior: "School administrators bring people and resources together so that the goals of the organizations and presumably of an encompassing social order may be met. . . . the administrator mediates between the organization and the people within it" (p. 73). As a mediator, the administrator sustains the school goals and focuses the direction of school personnel action to the attainment of these goals.

In order to accomplish this task, the administrator, under the positivistic perspective, assumes an underlying order in schools based upon the rational behavior of people. Thus, the administrator becomes a maintainer of this order by seeking to deter any deviations from the attainment of

school goals by sanctioning any irrational behavior by any member of the school community. Those members who work to attain school goals are rewarded appropriately.

The school organization, however, does not remain static. External influences seek to change school goals and it is the administrator's role to "mediate the impact of event sequences from external sources, and filter the influences that stem from links between rival centers of influence" (Smith, 1976, p. 137). In order to decide which influence shall or shall not be allowed to change the school focus, administrators, according to Bennis (1963), make their decisions based upon positivistic research:

> Change can be defined as a process of bringing together a change agent and client system to plan and attain an improved state of functioning in the client system by utilizing and applying valid knowledge. (p. 139)

For administrators, the goals of the school remain primary and all administrative decisions, mediations, behaviors and personnel evaluations are defined by these goals.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological Educational Administration Theory

The phenomenological researcher holds a different

perspective on theory due to the phenomenological assumption of objective reality being in a constant state of flux. Because of this unceasing change, the study of objective reality cannot produce generalizations. Reality is specifically situated as to time and place and only particulars can be discovered. Any order which seems apparent in human behavior is viewed by the phenomenological theorist as being imposed by the mind of the individual person who observes reality. Thus, truth is seen as relative to individual perceptions. Without generalizability as a goal, theory development becomes multiple theory production without the researcher being able to apply the theory produced from the research to any other situation except the situation observed. Greenfield (1974) indicates the goal of such particularistic theory generation: "The role of theory is to tell us the way things are rather than to point to the way they ought to be or how we would like them to be" (p. 4).

Since generalizability is not possible and since the only order which can be known is that which is imposed by the individual person, then the study of reality is focused on the perceptions of the individual and how that person makes sense out of a particular situation. Schools are, therefore, not viewed as a type of social structure but are

seen as unique constellations of individuals. Schools cannot be studied as objective entities because schools have no existence outside the perceptions of the individuals who engage in a relationship called "school." Schools can also not be studied as a classification because each school is considered to be a unique existential event defined by "the varied perceptions by individuals of what they can, should or must do in dealing with others" (Greenfield, 1974, p. 3). Each school can be known by research, but the study of one school cannot assist educators in understanding another school.

Likewise, educational administration behavior is unique to the specific time, place and individual person. Theory cannot provide answers or directions on how to behave in a situation. Theories derived from the study of various schools can be understood, uniquely interpreted and subjectively incorporated or discarded by an administrator. The behavior of the educational administrator cannot be generalized because overt administrative action may have different motivating factors. Greenfield (1978) defines educational administration behavior as particularistic and unique because it

> depends in large measure on self and on all the social processes by which the self is formed: it depends on who we are and on what others around us are thinking

and doing. (p. 12)

Thus, the phenomenological view of educational administration theory is seen to be one of multi-faceted perspectives on unique existential events. Such uniqueness can only be interpreted by individual administrators and become incorporated into that individual's perceptions of personal administrative behavior. And no formal research can result under the phenomenological perspective because of this uniqueness.

Phenomenological Educational Administration Practice

The phenomenological researcher views schools as invented concepts to fulfill the social purpose of education. Because schools have no objective existence, one can only define schools through the individual perceptions of those who comprise the school community. However, school personnel, while being the actual creators of the school, objectify this concept and thus become alienated from their own creation. Under the phenomenological perspective, it is the role of school administrators to assist school personnel, as well as themselves, to become aware of the primacy of individual perceptions in school formation.

Thus, there are no school goals for administrators to

attain. The goals are within each person and the administrator seeks to pursue his own goals. A school community is possible because the individuals involved share congruent goals. When a member of the school community's perceptions about education are no longer congruent with the perceptions of the other members, it is the role of the administrator to assist in the resolution of this incongruency through communication. There is no specific role which the administrator assumes. Administrative behavior is imposed from within the individual and not from external forces. Administrative behavior is, thus, uniquely defined by each person in that position and generalization of such behavior is not possible.

School communities are viewed by the phenomenological theorist as unordered and in a constant state of flux. Such consistent change is seen as healthy in that schools are evolutionary concepts which dynamically change according to how congruent individual goals change. Eisenstadt (1968) describes this evolutionary concept:

> Any institutional system is never fully homogeneous in the sense of being fully accepted or accepted to the same degree by all those participating in it. These different orientations may become the foci of conflict. (p. 17)

The school administrator, when such conflict arises,

views this as an opportunity for change. Only through conflict can the status quo be challenged, ideas changed and evolutionary movement made possible. Conflict does not arise out of behavioral problems themselves, but out of the perceptual differences which underlie these behaviors. Therefore, in the resolution of conflict, the administrator does not impose his perceptions on others, but attempts to assist others in the resolution of their perceptual differences.

While change is viewed as beneficial for schools, change cannot be imposed externally. Such imposition will occur only if the members of the school community choose to accept new ideas or practices. The school administrator can seek to influence change by communication, but the members of the school community remain free to choose or reject the proposed change. Thus, the role and behavior of administrators are seen to be viewed as personally defined conduct in the school community.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodological Educational Administration Theory

The ethnomethodological researcher also posits

objective reality as existing, but the knowledge of that reality can only be obtained by discovering the interpretation of that reality by social consensus. Social consensus imposes order on an ever-changing objective reality. Because reality is so ordered, the social rules generated by social consensus are the only generalizations possible and these social rules are what are defined as theories by ethnomethodological researchers. Smith (1984) defines the knowledge obtained through this theoretical position: "The basis of truth or trustworthiness is social agreement; what is judged true or trustworthy is what we can agree, conditioned by time and place, is true or trustworthy" (p. 386).

Thus, the implications for educational administration theory under the ethnomethodological perspective are not the discovery of abstract laws of human behavior, but the discovery of social rules which groups generate in social situations called schools. Schools are not viewed as a type of organization, but as conceptual structures which provide a framework for social action. The social action of the school community is seen to be the socialization of students. Because generalization is possible among similarly designated organizations, studies of student, teacher and administrative behavior across schools is

possible (Miles and Huberman, 1984b; Popkewitz, 1983); however, the results of such studies are not generalizable to all schools in all instances. The results are specific to the situation and people involved and the resulting conclusions would need to be reinterpreted in each new situation. Miles (1971) clarifies that schools have unique properties which make them inherently different from other organizations but which allow schools to be studied cross-categorically with reference to the uniqueness of the environment and individuals concerned.

The theories or social rules generated by these studies are stated in terms of explanations of practical situations. The goal of ethnomethodological theory is to define problems and their solutions because, as Silverman (1971) indicates: "Models are only useful for the illumination they throw on problems at issue" (p. 65). Thus, the results of school studies under an ethnomethodological perspective are stated in specific, practical language.

Popkewitz (1983) found that in the six schools under his study, the adoption of a new academic program was influenced by social groups directly and indirectly involved with the program. Miles and Huberman's (1984b) study on school improvement generated the reasons for the adoption or non-adoption of an innovative school program by teachers.

Both studies sought to answer the question of "why" not "what." The "why" resulting from the study is the theory generated.

This emphasis upon the "why" of behavior is based upon the ethnomethodological focus on group motivation. Because of this emphasis on motivation, ethnomethodological studies have received prominent emphasis in educational evaluation research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Reichardt and Cook, 1979) which has sought to know not just what happens in schools, but why people in schools behave as they do. Case study methodology in educational administration is also receiving renewed implementation as exemplified by Smyth's (1984) work on clinical supervision, Grant and Sleeter's (1986) study of a junior high school and Morris et al's (1984) perspective on principals' everyday actions.

Ethnomethodological Educational Administration Practice

The ethnomethodological researcher posits the situational aspects of a defined reality to be of primary importance. To study schools and the actions of school personnel, the researcher must view each instance of study as situation-specific. Thus, the study of educational administration behavior is viewed as being not only not

generalizable with administration in other organizations, but also being not generalizable between schools.

Each school community is viewed as unique in that reality is socially defined. The specific individuals who comprise the school community perceive the situation uniquely and the social interaction and social rules agreed upon by the school community also define the reality of that community. The administrative role is thus socially defined by the members of the school community and this definition interacts with the administrator's perceptions of that role. As schools are concepts created by people in order to realize their shared goals, roles are defined as tasks to acccomplish these goals. Thus, the administrative role is responsive to the shared goals of the specific school community and these behavioral expectations are assumed to be freely undertaken by the administrator.

Within a school, the administrator's primary task is that of communication. Communication is of intrinsic importance to the ethnomethodological researcher because "the common language available for the objectification of experiences is grounded in everyday life and keeps pointing back to it" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 25). Language is the only means the administrator has of discovering the perceptions of the school community and the only means for

the open transmission of the shared values of that community. Language allows the administrator to maintain the focus on the goals to be attained. Thus, the administrator must assist school personnel in interpreting what has occurred in the schools in order to identify the meaning behind past actions. Meaning can only be known retrospectively because it is after the action that one can look back to determine the significance of an action in context, and meaning can only be expressed in language.

The administrator is also viewed as a negotiator between conflicting perceptions. Schools are dynamic and unordered concepts with order imposed by the shared goals of the community. When perceptions of individuals are in conflict with these goals, the administrator is to assist individuals to reconcile their differences.

Critical Theory

Critical Educational Administration Theory

Critical theory posits reality as being in a constant state of change. Because of this change, laws are not sought by the critical theorist. Only specifics can be known. Theory is seen to be generated by the individual, by

groups and by society as a totality. Theory generation occurs when each of these categories engages in the reflection on the difference between reality and appearance. The goal of such theory generation is to motivate human action.

Schools are viewed by the critical theorist as created human structures which maintain current societal ideology. As such, schools continue the social and intellectual restraints which cause people to remain oppressed. As a proponent of ideological maintenance, schools participate in establishing "the contraints on truth-speaking practices which prevent the populace and theorists alike from exposing outrageous social conditions" (Fuhrman and Sizek, 1979-80, p. 39). While schools are seen as aligned with the oppressive status quo, Bressler (1963) perceives schools as having the potential to emancipate society:

> Social change can be controlled by the application of disciplined intelligence. . . the educational process is the only alternative to stagnation or revolutionary violence. It is the duty of education to preside over gradualistic change toward a more perfect expression of the democratic tradition. (p. 8)

The role of educational administration theory from the critical perspective is to enable individuals within the schooling process to become aware of the societal ideological restraints placed upon them and, through

reflection, become less controlled by restraints. Thus, theory is not "a mere vehicle that becomes superfluous as soon as the data are at hand" (Giroux, 1983, p. 17), but a vital, dynamic and evolutionary motivator for action. Schools are seen as objective entities engaged in ideological maintenance, but there exists no body of theory about schools because schools are composed of individual people and the tension between these individuals and the school is what provides the impetus for these individuals to engage in critique of such oppression and thus become less restrained.

For the educational administrator, critical theory does not provide statements of how that person should act. Instead, critical theory generates statements of specific instances of reality in schooling which the administrator then reflects upon. These statements of reality are evaluated and then incorporated into the actions of the administrator, if the statements are reflectively acceptable. Examples of such reflective statements for consideration are Apple's (1979) and Sharp's (1980) exposure of the political and economic influences on school curriculum. Thus, there is not a specific body of theory on educational administration from the critical perspective. Theory is generated by the individual engaged in the

critique of reality and the resultant exposure of the inconsistencies between the real and the ideal. Under this perspective, each person is a theorist and the theory generated is personal and may or may not be accepted by others.

Critical Educational Administration Practice

The critical researcher, like the positivistic researcher, assumes a distinction between theory and practice; however, the critical researcher seeks to unify theory and practice whereby "the understanding of the contradictions inherent in existing society becomes constitutive of the very activity to transform society" (Bernstein, 1976, p. 182). Thus, the exposure of the contrast between the real and ideal through the process of critique provides an awareness which moves people to change society more toward the ideal. The tasks of the school administrator are to expose the influence of societal ideology on the school's ideology, to assist members of the school community to become aware of their own ideological influences and to engage in personal dialectic to understand the ideological influences upon personal administrative behavior.

The critical perspective views language as the most prominent social means of reifying ideology in any organization. Thus, the focus of the school administrator should be upon the language regarding schools used by society, by members of the school community, and by the administrator personally. Language is the means whereby the myths and values which are subconsciously adhered to are translated into overt representations. The exposure of this underlying ideology occurs when individuals are provided with the impetus and means to reflect upon what has occurred and then engage in open dialogue about these perceptions. Bernstein (1976) terms such discourse by school personnel as a "free, unconstrained community of enquirers" (p. 214). Thus, the administrator is not viewed as one who has more power, but as one who provides the setting and climate for all members of the school community, including the administrator, to engage in open dialogue as equals in order to expose the underlying influences on school personnel behavior.

Such exposure must result in more than mere knowledge because as Freud (Bernstein, 1976) indicates, mere knowledge, even in the field of psychotherapy, does not lead to change: "If knowledge about the unconscious were as important for the patient as people inexperienced in

psychoanalysis imagine, listening to lectures or reading books would be enough to cure him" (p. 201). The exposure of underlying influences on school personnel behavior must result in a change of perceptions which is made apparent through a change in language and action. Action should be based upon personal choice and become more emancipated from ideological influences. This more freely situated behavior is termed by Habermas (Bernstein, 1976) as strategic action in that it depends upon correct evaluation of alternative choices which result from calculation supplemented by values and not from calculation based upon control.

Summary

Upon analysis, the impact of applying different research methods to educational administration has far-reaching implications for theory and practice.

If positivism continues to dominate the educational administration field, then theory generation will remain separated from practice because theory will be generalizations of abstract administrative behavior which the practitioner must extrapolate to specific instances of behavior. Phenomenological theory would be neither generalizable nor directive but would provide another view

of reality which the individual administrator could choose to accept or reject. The acceptance of ethnomethodology by educational administration researchers would produce theory based upon the consensus of the members for each specific school community. Emphasis would also be placed upon the social context of administrative behavior with theory indicating how this context influences unique and specific action. Critical theory would generate no body of formal theory regarding educational administration, but there would exist a dynamic process of self-reflection which would result in the administrator becoming more self-determined.

Insert Table A

Under the positivistic perspective, the educator would continue to define the administrative role by its relation to the goals of the school, as maintainer of the inherent order of a school system, and as controlling agent in the school who assumes the role of authority and responsibility. The phenomenological view of educational administration practice would define the administrative role by the unique perceptions of the administrator whose task would be to negotiate individual school members' perceptual differences. If ethnomethodology were accepted as a legitimate basis for

educational administration practice, then the administrative role would be defined by the agreed-upon goals of the school community. The individual administrator would be viewed as a communicator and negotiator and not as one in a position of power. Authority and responsibility would be shared by all members of the school community, including students and parents. Critical theory acceptance would provide a view of educational administration practice as defined by the individual administrator and by the social consensus of the school community. The administrator would be seen as one member of the school community who assists the other members toward their goals of emancipating their human capacities.

Insert Table B

Conclusion

Whether in defense of or in opposition to positivism, authors have taken sides in this debate because empirical research is considered to be the only legitimate methodology in all fields of inquiry. Bendix and Roth (1971) clarify this opposition to positivism:

> From being a method of inquiry to answer carefully

> delimited questions, science has been turned into a fetish with which to interpret the world, advise politicians, examine the future, provide an education and entertain the public. (p. 102)

When any theoretical position or research methodology becomes established as the primary position or methodology, then proponentss of other positions or methods will seek to "dethrone" this position or method. The proponents of other positions and methodologies seek either to preplace positivism or to establish an oligarchical methodological situation.

The replacement of positivism with any other paradigm will cause the same form of debates to occur. As Frank (1984) indicates, positivism has served educational administration well, but incompletely. Every other research paradigm also has limitations and, "when research paradigm turns to research ideology, the seeds for decreasing usefulness are sown" (p. 13). No one researach methodology can be "the" research methodology for edcational administration because of the limitations inherent in each.

Phenomenological research has been criticized as being so specific to individual experience as to have no meaning for theorists or practitioners. As Griffiths (1979) states: "It is of little value to anyone other than the individual using this approach" (p. 56). Braithwaite (1955) also

criticizes phenomenological research as being non-existent in that its application to sociobehavioral study is minimal. Phenomenology is often faulted for being a philosophical position and not a true research methodology.

While the number of ethnomethodological case studies have significantly increased in the field of education, the case study approach continues to be judged as an inadequate research method as indicated in two apects of the case study procedure. First, case studies are situation-specific and, as such, provide the researcher and practitioner with a static view of reality in which process and change cannot be discerned (Welck, 1969, p. 19). Case study procedure is also critiqued because of the assumed involvement of the researcher in the research process. Barnes (1967) summarizes this position in his statement that "participants become involved and overly subjective: they begin to to overvalue and push their own beliefs and normative theories" (p. 77).

Critical theory's application to the field of education administration is just beginning to develop in the works of Foster and Bates. However, van den Berg (1980) posits inherent logical flaws in the critical theory paradigm: First, if man is able to freely choose, then he is able to choose the irrational as well as the rational: second, the

higher truth sought by critical theorists is undefined, unverifiable and elusive.

Each research methodology can be critiqued because each methodology has limitations. If any methodology existed which could not be criticized, then that paradigm would desreve the position of primacy.

Thus, no "one" research methodology holds the "answer" to reality. The limitations of alternative research methodologies must be accepted, as well as the limitations of positivism. These debates are second-level arguments in that research methodologies are based upon historically formalized perspectives of people's beliefs about reality. The debates are really about beliefs of individual researchers to which no simple resolution can occur. However, whatever the "outcome" of these debates, a new richness of interpretation will exist for educational administration research, theory and practice.

TABLE A

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION THEORY

	Positivism	Phenomenology	Ethnomethodology	Critical Theory
1. Philosophical Bases	1. reality ordered and known objectively	1. reality unordered and known subjectively by individual	1. reality unordered and known subjectively by group consensus	1. interaction between objective and subjective knowledge of reality
2. School Definition	2. type of organization	2. unique concepts of individual members	2. unique concepts of school community consensus	2. maintainer of societal ideology
3. School Administration Definition	3. as type of generalizable administration	3. unique perceptions of individual members of school community	3. unique social consensus of members of school community	3. reflection of individual embodying individual and societal ideology
4. Goal of Theory	4. generate laws to predict and control administrative action	4. explain individual perceptions regarding administrative behavior	4. explain social rules regarding administrative behavior	4. emancipation from externally and internally imposed constraints upon administrative behavior

TABLE B

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION PRACTICE

	Positivism	Phenomenology	Ethnomethodology	Critical Theory
1. Application	1. generalizable to all administrative practice	1. unique to individual administrator	1. unique to specific school community	1. unique to individual administrator and school community
2. Role Definition	2. by school goals which are other than individual or social goals	2. by individual perceptions of administrator	2. by social consensus of school community	2. by individual administrator perceptions and social consensus of school community
3. Order of Schools	3. inherent in school organizations	3. imposed by individual administrator	3. imposed by school community	3. movement toward more rational administrative behavior
4. Administrative Task	4. maintain order in school setting	4. communication of congruent individual perceptions	4. communication of shared goals of school community	4. provide climate of critique for members of school community
5. Conflict Resolution	5. impose sanctions to maintain school order	5. negotiate differences of individual perceptions	5. negotiate differences between individual perceptions and school community consensus	5. provide climate for discourse by members of school community
6. Administrative Focus	6. actions of administrator	6. individual perceptions of administrator	6. language which indicates shared goals of school community	6. ideological influence on education via language

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